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Article

Privileged Daughters? Gendered Mobility among Highly Educated Chinese Female Migrants in the UK

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Abstract

The one-child generation daughters born to middle-class Chinese parents enjoy the privilege of concentrated family resources and the opportunity for education overseas. We focus on the “privileged daughters” who have studied abroad and remained overseas as professionals. Using three cases of post-student female migrants who were of different ages and at different life stages, we situate their socioeconomic mobility in the context of intergenerational relationships and transnational social space. Drawing on further interview data from the same project we argue that, although the “privileged daughters” have achieved geographical mobility and upward social mobility, through education and a career in a Western country, their life choices remain heavily influenced by their parents in China. Such findings highlight the transnationally transferred gendered burden among the relatively “elite” cohort, thus revealing a more nuanced gendered interpretation of transnational socioeconomic mobility.

Keywords

career trajectory; China; gendered mobility; one-child generation; overseas education

Issue

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1. Introduction

China’s economic reform and one-child policy in the late 1970s have given rise to a large number of one-child middle-class families who have invested heavily in the education of their only child. Meanwhile, China finds itself at the top among international student-sending countries to the Global Northwest (Cebolla-Boado, Hu, & Soysal, 2017). The numbers of female students travelling from China to study in the most popular Western education destinations are consistently higher than for those of their male counterparts. In 2014, 63% of Chinese international students in British universities were female (Wang & Miao, 2015). A survey conducted in the UK showed that 94% of Chinese female students re-

ceived funding for their studies from their parents; for the male students the figure was 88% (Kajanus, 2015). Urban middle-class parents have invested heavily in their daughters’ education. These well-educated women echo what Xie (2019) described in her research as “privileged daughters” growing up during China’s rapid economic development: an unintended consequence of the one-child policy.

However, “privileged daughters” face a complex social landscape beyond education. Between 2010 and 2020, China’s ranking in *The Global Gender Gap Report* dropped from 61 (out of 134 countries) to 106 (out of 153 countries), with the most significant drop in the sub-index “economic participation and opportunity” (from 46 to 86; Hausmann, Tyson, & Zahidi, 2010;

World Economic Forum, 2020). Recent research increasingly points to the contradictory social expectations for highly educated woman in the competitive employment market and in the Chinese patriarchal marriage market. The former demands “modern” characteristics such as independence, while the latter values “traditional” virtues such as obedience (Liu, 2017). Yingchun Ji’s (2015, pp. 8–15) “modern-traditional mosaic” phrase captures ‘this strange mix of traditional family values fused with a Western modern belief’ (Ji, 2015, p. 15) which unmarried career women must adopt in order to create individual solutions to ‘make sense of the unfair world and their continued need to make sacrifices within it’ (Ji, 2015, p. 15). The social and cultural capital accumulated by “privileged daughters” through their higher education is heavily circumscribed by the “traditional” gender expectations of their natal family and Chinese society at large (Hong-Fincher, 2014; Xie, 2019). However, little is known about how these women navigate their mobility in a Western context. In order to explore the relationship between physical distance and gender expectations, as mediated through ongoing ties with “left behind” parents, this article draws on data from in-depth interviews with professional Chinese women who completed their post-graduate education in the UK and continued to work and live in the UK.

2. “Privileged Daughters”: Embodied Tensions under Rapid Social Transformation

Because of the lack of competition from siblings, especially brothers, the vast majority of urban girls born under the one-child policy enjoy unprecedented educational investment from their parents (Tsui & Rich, 2002). Only-daughters born into Chinese urban households are often treated by their parents as their “only hope” to carry family expectations (Fong, 2004). Against this backdrop, parental investment in higher education generated China’s emerging “silver-lined” middle-class in the one-child generation.

These developments enabled women to become autonomous, self-authoring subjects as demanded by a competitive global market. Such individual traits have been observed among the young-adult only-children that Liu (2006) interviewed during their university years, as well as in Xie’s (2017) study of middle-class only-daughters who are trained to live up to the capitalist ideal: self-realisation through competitiveness. Meanwhile, only-children and their parents are found to have demonstrated much closer relationships and emotional attachment to each other compared to previous generations (Evans, 2010; Yan, 2015). Within the family and employment market nexus, obtaining success that is accepted by Chinese society is not only these only children’s personal objectives, but also crucial in becoming a morally filial child to their parents. Therefore, to some extent, these women’s embodied experience reflects the core and tensions of living under modern transforma-

tions of Chinese society with a persistent traditional cultural influence.

Liu (2006, p. 501) reveals that only-daughters are expected by their parents to ‘integrate both masculine and feminine characteristics, combine both inner and outer beauty, and perform both expressive and instrumental functions,’ while their male counterparts are still assessed mainly by their talent, as tradition requires. In contrast to the traditional belief that “ignorance is a woman’s virtue” (*nü zi wu cai bian shi de*), being a well-educated professional woman does not necessarily exempt her from fulfilling marriage and childbirth expectations (Xie, 2019). The rest of the article will explore whether, or how, these daughters’ education, employment, and home-making overseas provide resources to renegotiate the gender expectations in transnational social space.

3. Education and Migration to the West as a Family Mobility Strategy

Previous research shows that the decision of East Asian parents to send their children to study in the developed “West” has been interpreted as a family capital accumulation strategy where (middle-class) parents invest economic capital in their children in exchange for cultural capital (notably an overseas degree; Waters, 2005). Study abroad from China was initiated by the Chinese state in 1978; largely state-funded period in the 1980s. Self-funded study abroad in the 1990s was followed by a rapid increase during the first decade of the 21st century, and has continued to grow (Tu, 2018). In recent years, the vast majority of Chinese students has become self-funded (88.97%; Ministry of Education, 2018). Because of the spatial difference in the global distribution of education resources and employment opportunities, parents hope that children with a “Western” degree will gain advantage over locally educated graduates in the Chinese employment market. Like their East Asian counterparts, Chinese families also expect their returnee children to contribute to class solidification of the family as a whole (Fong, 2011; Kajanus, 2015; Ong, 1999; Tu, 2018; Waters, 2005).

However, longitudinal research reveals that such a family strategy may not develop as planned: Waters’ study (2011) on underage students from Hong Kong to Canada showed the breaking down of parent-child, husband-wife relations over time due to the long-distance separation. Apart from being a family strategy, individuals, especially among female participants, also placed much emphasis on cultivating a cosmopolitan personhood during their time abroad (Kajanus, 2015; Martin, 2014; Tu, 2018). Following the career trajectory of British-educated graduates’ who remained in the UK and those who returned to China, Tu and Nehring (2019) discovered a constantly changing meaning of mobility: Post-study migrants continuously make comparisons between themselves and their peers in China, reflecting an ongoing influence of their home society.

Table 1. Marital status and income level of participants.

Marital status	Number of participants	
	(female)	(male)
Single	5	8
In a relationship	3	3
Married	4	1
Married with children	8	1
Income level (per year)	Number of participants	
	(female)	(male)
£15,000–25,000	5	3
£25,000–35,000	6	4
£35,000–55,000	5	4
£22,100	Median income of UK taxpayers aged 25–35 in 2014 (HM Revenue and Customs, 2019)	

Note: One participant did not wish to reveal her income level.

The above literature points to the multi-layered meanings of study abroad for both the individual student and their family, as well as the uncertainty attached to the post-study migration trajectory. In the UK, more than half of the Chinese students came to study on a Master's taught degree course (Bolton, 2019), reflecting a highly educated profile. Finding a job after graduation is the most common way for Chinese students to remain in the UK (Tu, 2018). However, the difficulty in doing so increased after the 2008 financial crisis; it triggered an inward-looking employment market, followed by a more restrictive work visa regime. In spite of the difficulties, the majority of women in the 2014 study found employment in the UK after 2008. Those who started working before 2008 have obtained permanent residency. Success in the selective nature of the British job market identifies these women as the most "privileged" category of Chinese daughters. However, we argue that despite their transnational mobility, their life trajectories are still heavily shaped by the traditional gender roles embedded in Chinese society.

4. Data and Method

This article draws its data from an interview-based research project involving mainland Chinese highly skilled migrants working in the UK in 2014. Their professions

include accountancy, lecturing, and advertising management, with income profiles placing them mostly in middle and upper middle range in the UK (see Table 1). Of the interviewees 18 are female and 10 are male professionals; they came to the UK as students; and five postgraduate students and seven sets of parents of the participants were also interviewed to provide supplementary material. Participants were recruited via various channels, apart from initial snowball sampling, advertisements on online forums and social network service groups were also used to expand the geographical coverage and the diversity (in terms of professions, place of residence in the UK, hometown in China) of the sample. Although efforts were made to recruit a more gender-balanced sample, the larger number of female participants reflects the female-dominated population of international students from mainland China in the UK (People.cn, 2013). For the purpose of this article, we focus on the female participants' accounts.

We have selected three transnationally mobile daughters as focal points of our discussion (see Table 2). They are in different life stages: Dahong is single; Beiyao is just married and has a new-born baby; and Meilin has been married for more than ten years and has a school-age son. Their different life stages reveal the continuities and changes of the significant social factors that shape their life decisions. Each life stage from before, during

Table 2. Background of the three case study participants.

Name	Age	Length of stay	Education level	Hometown in China	Occupation	Marital status	Visa type
Meilin	37	10	Master	Shanghai	Accountant (part-time)	Married, has a son	Permanent residency
Beiyao	30	8	PhD	Northern city	Process engineer	Married, has a son	Work
Dahong	27	6	Master	Southern town	Marketing analyst	Single	Work

Note: Beiyao's mother was also interviewed.

and after their overseas education, illustrates the shifting gender expectation they experienced, particularly the parental influence throughout the whole process. It is important to note the self-selective nature of women recruited in the study: The parents who sent their daughters to study in the UK tend to be more amicable to Western culture, which does not necessarily mean that the parents of our participants are bound to be opposing traditional Chinese culture; there is no way, in this study, to testify such a feature.

5. Three Cases: Meilin, Beiyao, and Dahong

All three women are from middle-class families: Both Dahong's parents are senior civil servants; both Beiyao's parents are university-educated teachers; and Meilin's parents belong to an older generation and did not have a chance to go to university. Meilin's parents initially worked full time in the public sector but, as the private sector started to grow in the 1990s, Meilin's mother's success in her business venture helped increase the family's affluence. All of their parents (together with most of other participants' parents in the original research) experienced hardship in China in the 1960s and 1970s during the planned economy period and the Cultural Revolution; they also benefited from China's post 1970s economic development. The parents' cohort obtained upward social mobility during the rapid wealth redistribution and class stratification between 1980 and 2000 (Xiang & Shen, 2009).

5.1. Dahong, the Entrepreneurial Spirit and the Pressure to Marry

Dahong's parents were strict about their daughter's studies. Because some of their relatives were settled overseas, the study abroad plan for Dahong seemed a routine matter: 'But my dad is very traditional, he doesn't like a girl going abroad alone at a young age.' Dahong's overseas education did not begin until she finished high school and when her Paris-based uncle promised to look after her in France.

Dahong arrived in France for a pre-university language course in 2007 and soon realised that it would take her at least three years to learn French well enough to study in a university. Without telling her parents, Dahong applied to a university in London and was accepted. Her parents later supported her change of study location given that the UK course took less time. Dahong completed her undergraduate degree and Master's degree in London in design and management. She spent her summer holidays doing an internship with a fashion company in London and became its full-time employee upon her graduation in 2014.

Compared to many other Chinese graduates who had to return home because of the tightened UK visa policy and the increasingly competitive UK job market, Dahong was successful. However, when talking about her career

and future in the UK, Dahong expressed doubt and uncertainty. She saw this job as 'temporary' and wanted to start her own business, but her entrepreneurial ambition was challenged by her parents, especially her father: being a business woman was 'unconventional,' and as such it would be difficult to find a spouse:

He said that I should get married as soon as possible. A girl should not run a company. Even if you succeeded in having a business and have a high income, your status in the marriage market would be lower than a girl working as a clerk in a bank. Working in a bank sounds decent, but a businesswoman sounds [pause]. My dad doesn't like girls to be too strong. He said if I really want to start a company, I may do it after I get married, not before.

When asked for her own timing of starting a family, Dahong, then 27 years old, gave herself a 'deadline of 35': 'As long as I have kids by 35 it will be ok, so that means I should get married when I'm 31 or 32.' Therefore, although appearing to be resistant to her father's opinion, Dahong does not fundamentally challenge the socially expected female life course of marriage and motherhood.

5.2. Beiyao, the Pride of Her Mother

Beiyao's real Chinese name literally means "better than men." Her mother, a high school English teacher, gave her the name as a gesture of rebellion against Beiyao's grandparents, who would have preferred a grandson. Since Beiyao was a child, her mother had devoted herself to Beiyao's education and career success. In 2003, Beiyao completed her Master's degree in China and started her second Master's degree in the UK: 'My parents designed the study abroad route for me, they've been telling me how advanced overseas education and technologies are, so it seemed natural that I came to study in the UK.' When Beiyao finished her British Master's degree, her parents encouraged her to continue to do a PhD and were willing to fund it. Beiyao finished her PhD in a reputable British university and found a job as process engineer in a chemical company. When interviewed in 2014, she had just married a fellow Chinese migrant who was working as a lecturer and given birth to her son a month previously.

Beiyao's mother travelled frequently between China and the UK to support Beiyao during significant stages in her daughter's overseas life journey: the completion of the PhD; job-hunting; and childbirth. In the interview with Beiyao's mother, she explained that her motivation to support her daughter's upward mobility was largely due to the gender inequality she had herself experienced:

To be honest, my generation didn't live for ourselves, we were always thinking about others' needs. Look, we obey our parents and parents-in-law. As for our

husbands, we have to support our husbands, let him advance in his career without worrying about managing the household. We women have our own job, too, and we must do equally well in our career, that's a lot of hard work. Also, we need to look after our child, and hope our child will be successful. Women's life is really, really hard.

Beiyao's husband, Demin (33, a lecturer living in the UK for 11 years) mentioned career-planning and family reunification in the near future and claimed that he 'should be the centre of family relocation, my wife is working too far away, she should think about how to move nearer to me.' At the point of interview, Beiyao and her husband were working in different parts of England and it was likely to pose problems for the couple in raising a family. Since Beiyao indicated frequently how much she enjoyed her current job, whether the future relocation will be a dilemma for her remains to be seen. What is clear so far is that in these Chinese female migrants' marriages to fellow Chinese male migrants, they also need to face negotiation with their husbands who are likely to expect their wives to become trailing spouses.

5.3. Meilin, the Compromised Career Woman

Meilin graduated from a top university in Shanghai and came to study for a Master's degree in the UK in 2001. At that time, study abroad was uncommon and was regarded as very privileged, but her wish to study in the UK was opposed by her father and boyfriend because they believed Meilin could find a good job in China, and that an overseas degree seemed unnecessary. Meilin's mother supported her and funded her Master's degree in the UK: 'At that time the exchange rate was 14 yuan to one pound, it was a large sum of money for us, almost enough to buy a small flat. But I was strong-minded and ready to go.'

During her studies, she met a fellow Chinese student who later became her husband. Upon the completion of their courses they both returned to China in 2003. Meilin immediately secured a high-income, high-status job in a top international accounting firm. With the birth of her son in 2007, Meilin thought she 'had the life she always dreamed of.' However, at the same year, Meilin's husband decided to pursue his career in the UK. Meilin thought about getting a divorce, but her parents advised against it: 'They are very traditional about marriage. They think divorce is bad for the woman and the child. They proposed to look after my son in China so that I could follow my husband to the UK.'

Meilin compromised, left China, and tried to establish an 'equally high-level career' in London. However, her job-hunting coincided with the 2008 financial crisis. Even with an impressive résumé, Meilin could not find a job in the finance sector. The later compromise, together with Meilin's child's joining her in the UK, led to a shift in Meilin's life focus from career to family. In our interview

in 2014, Meilin had made peace with the loss of her career in China:

In 2008 I thought my life was ruined, but the longer I lived in the UK, the more peaceful I became. My kid's progress now matters to me more than a glamorous job. Now I have time to do painting, gardening and discover other hobbies.

Nevertheless, Meilin insisted on not becoming a full-time housewife; she worked as a part-time accountant for a small company: 'It's my personality, I am an independent woman, I cannot accept not working at all.'

6. The Intergenerational Continuity of Gender Norms

As we see from all the three case studies, the parents of these women are supportive of their daughters' higher education, which is a widely observed phenomenon under the one-child policy in the absence of a son. It was common to hear remarks such as 'I raised my daughter like a son,' or 'I was raised like a son' in interviews with only-daughter's parents and with female migrants. Examples such as keeping the daughter out of the traditionally female territory (like the kitchen) or discouraging teenage daughters from using make-up were mentioned in interviews as ways to ensuring daughters concentration on their academic progress during school years. However, this rise of education expectation on girls does not exempt them from fulfilling gendered success that is required by their privileged class position as part of their natal family. In particular, when adult daughters step into employment and marriage, the gendered twist of family expectation became clear in all three cases, which illustrates that, for these daughters, the meaning of "success" took a sharp shift from academic attainment to the incorporation of a successful marriage and family life. Without it, it is hard to be seen as "truly successful" as a middle-class Chinese woman. It can be argued that such a 'gender contradiction' (Martin, 2014, p. 24) placed among the "privileged daughters" reflects a popular denunciation of Maoist feminism since the 1970s reform, which is believed to have 'emasculated men, masculinized women, and mistakenly equates the genders' (Rofel, 1999, p. 117) without removing women's domestic burden. A "successful" daughter in such context needs to fulfil education achievement, as well as having a suitable job that does not jeopardize her marriage. In this sense, women and their family in three case studies have demonstrated different levels of cooperation and negotiations in their responses to such requests.

As we see in the account of Beiyao's mother, while she behaved according to what is required of a good wife in supporting her husband, child, and in-laws, she expressed a strong sense of unfairness towards a woman's role as both the breadwinner and family carer: 'Women's life is really, really hard.' As someone who experienced gender discrimination herself because of failing to pro-

duce a son, she was committed to providing both financial and practical support to ensure Beiyao's academic achievement: a second Master's degree and PhD in the UK. As the choice of Beiyao's name—"better than man"—indicates, her life path carries her mother's dreams and hope to prove to others that it is not a misfortune to give birth to a daughter. This could be interpreted as a coping strategy to regain both the family and individual woman's dignity in a society that continuously values sons over daughters.

Meilin's mother achieved her own economic upward mobility by venturing into the private sector. When Meilin experience opposition to her wish to study abroad from the male members of her domestic circle (i.e., father and boyfriend), similar to Beiyao's mother, Meilin's mother supported her daughter's academic mobility with significant financial sacrifice. The mothers' generation had lived and worked during China's socialist period, when women were said to 'uphold half the sky' (Evans, 2007). This has normalised Chinese women's participation in the paid labour force, and symbolically inscribed a modern female subjectivity with financial independence. This period of history has a significant impact on younger women's perception of a modern successful self: 'It's my personality, I am an independent woman, I cannot accept not working at all' (Meilin). Nevertheless, in current Chinese society, career achievements are significantly overshadowed by not having (a successful) marriage for women. In this cultural context, the seemingly contradictory response from Meilin's parents in offering childcare support and encouraging Meilin to give up her successful career in China to follow her husband, when their daughter was considering a divorce, can be understood.

Similarly, Dadong's father, on the one hand, supported his daughter's overseas education to Master's degree level; on the other hand, he 'doesn't like girls to be too strong.' Such seeming contradictions appear in Dadong's father's expectations, we argue, are in fact consistent in parents' wish to support his daughter to achieve "life success" that matches her class and gender position: having a "happy and complete family." Suggesting that his daughter marry before starting a company could be understood as a strategic move to secure success in both public and domestic spheres, considering China's wide-spread belief in "female hypergamy" and male superiority (Xie, in press). If Dahong becomes financially more successful than her potential male suitors that could intimidate them, thus restricting her chances of finding a good match, whereas a "decent" white collar job such as "clerk in a bank" ticks the box of being "stable": hence being a modern woman without risking her marriage prospects.

In these daughters' narratives about such crucial life decisions, the role of parents is significant. Parents are not only actively involved in their children's decision making, but also provide critically practical support to facilitate their daughter's transnational mobility. In securing their transnational upward social mobility, part of our

female participants' gendered burden is transferred to their parents, especially mothers. For instance, Meilin's mother intervened in her daughter's decision to divorce, but offered childcare support to enable Meilin to follow her husband to the UK; Beiyao's mother continued her role as family carer as she travelled between China and the UK by herself to provide childcare to her daughter.

These cases demonstrate that the lives of both mothers and daughters are intricately intertwined, both emotionally and practically. The role of fathers varies in each case, but in the wider sample mothers of the one-child generation migrants tend to shoulder more childcare duties. Such a family effort involving three generations are not unusual in Asian societies caught between the modern and the traditional. For example, Ji (2013) argues that an extended family's willingness to help with childcare is a key contextual factor that can help women's efforts to combine the modern role and traditional mother-and-wife role. However, in (most) mothers' help in sharing daughter's childcare duty, the gendered burden is transferred back to the older generation, which arguably reinforces the "privileged daughters'" perception of gendered expectations in marriage and motherhood. In the cases we see, the close nexus between mother and their only daughters constitutes a "maternal care unit" where gender expectations are preserved and passed down along the generational line.

7. Navigating Gender Expectation in a Transnational Social Space

'Migrants are often embedded in multi-layered, multi-sited transnational social fields, encompassing those who move and those who stay behind' (Levitt & Schiller, 2006, p. 1003). These multi-layered transnational social fields could afford women some flexibility while negotiating gender expectations from home. We are not claiming that gender norms are more equal in the UK than in China, but geographical distance from their close family members avoids immediate social pressure of marriage and childbirth at a "correct" time, thus their migration status serve as important resources for these women to resist fixed gender norms expected from them at home.

In the transnational social space between China and the UK, migrants constantly readjust themselves to the expectations they perceive from home and abroad. Finding a middle ground in the 'contradictory class mobility' (Leung, 2017, p. 10) becomes a way for migrant women to make sense of their transnational experiences. For Meilin, it means discovering hobbies such as painting and gardening that she had never had chance to develop in her hectic career life, while working as a part-time accountant to avoid becoming a full-time housewife. A similar middle ground is seen when facing marriage pressure: Dahong articulates a deadline for herself to have children by the age of 35; it seemed to her an acceptable age for marriage and motherhood in London, thus leaving some time to fulfil her entrepreneurial ambition.

On the other hand, living in a different culture could make an individual long for cultural similarities in a partner for better compatibility. Despite the marriage pressure, Dahong insisted that she would not consider a non-Chinese man for marriage because of her concern about cultural misunderstandings towards sharing responsibilities in married life. Most female participants did not express a clear preference with respect to nationality or ethnicity when choosing a spouse. In fact, seven out of the 12 married women in the 2014 research project have a non-Chinese spouse. We appreciate that such preference can only be read as indicative considering the small sample, but the women's relatively open attitude towards marrying a non-Chinese person could be read as a way to bypass unwanted gender expectations on women from Chinese partners, as well as a strategy to secure their social position within the host country. As seen in Beiyao's and Meilin's cases, the clash between the women's career aspiration and their husband's expectation posed obstacles to furthering their socioeconomic mobility.

These women's life choices are significantly shaped by their gendered and class positions. Their transnational mobility renders them a certain degree of freedom to pursue their modern female objectivities that is less rigidly defined by their home context. However, despite physically moving away from Chinese society, their close ties with their parents ensures their fulfilment of certain gendered expectations from China's patriarchal family value system: what remains in the process of constructing a sense of modern self is the constant negotiation with the traditional forms of family relations.

8. Conclusion

'Gender is a powerful ideological device, which produces, reproduces and legitimates the choices and limits that are predicated on sex category' (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 147). The gender impact of transnational mobility is often side-lined in research to do with students and high skill migrants (Leung, 2017). By exploring the lives of these "privileged daughters," gender inequality is thrown into sharp relief. In this article, we reveal women's gains in attaining bargaining chips in gender negotiations through occupying these transnational spaces. On the other hand, despite their achieved upward international mobility, the daughters remain restricted by their gendered position through the close ties with their parents.

The three cases discussed provide clear evidence of heavy parental involvement in the daughters' life decisions from education and transnational mobility to marital choices. Living and working in the UK constitutes an important part of their "privileged" status together with their overseas education. However, as we saw in all three cases, despite being at different marital stages, a successful marriage remains a crucial criterion in establishing their class position as a successful woman.

The close emotional and economic connection with their natal parents effectively ties the daughters to the defined gendered expectations of the successful woman in Chinese society.

Therefore, we argue that, for these women, gendered mobility has two dimensions: on the one hand the intergenerational continuity of gender norms; on the other hand, the ways in which individuals navigate gender expectations in transnational social space. Although the "privileged daughters" have achieved geographical mobility and upward social mobility through educational success and a professional career in a Western country, they are still being "pulled back" by their parents who are "left behind" in China.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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